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ABSTRACT

This paper describes research designed to provide data to help answer three questions regarding students' cognition of the importance of classroom guidance activities. The questions are: (1) What rank would students rate the importance of classroom guidance activities among 21 kinds of subjects in secondary school? (2) What is the most important question and what is the least important question in student's choice of 33 kinds of guidance contents, and what are the reasons? (3) Will gender and personality have interactive influence on the scores of the cognition of importance? The results of this study found that there are 21 class subjects in junior high schools in Taiwan and the importance of Classroom Guidance Activities ranked 19th, showing that these activities are unimportant from the viewpoint of students. But when students were asked to rate the degree of importance of the 33 contents of guidance curriculum separately, the average point of rank was between "very important" and "important". The three most important contents that students rated were to learn the art of building human relationships, to learn how to escape from danger and protect oneself from harm, and to know the relations between career decisions and life. It also found that female students attached more importance to the contents of guidance curriculum than male students. (Contains an appendix and 5 data tables.) (JDM)

STUDENTS' COGNITION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CONTENT OF GUIDANCE CURRICULUM

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Dr. Chen is an associate professor of the Department of Education at National Kaohsiung Normal University, Taiwan, Republic of China. She is very much interested in the study of classroom guidance activities. She has expressed "A study on student's learning style preferences and factors that influence on teachers' decision during her instruction Classroom Guidance Activities course in junior high school" and "A research on the factors that influence student's cognition of the importance of the content of guidance curriculum". The former got the encouragement from National Science Council. The latter was praised publicly on the annual meeting of mental hygiene institute of Republic of China.

Introduction

There are four areas to conduct guidance activities in school i.e. (1) Individual Counseling, (2) Small Group Counseling, (3) Big Group Guidance, (4) Classroom Guidance Activities. In Taiwan, junior high school Classroom Guidance Activities course was set into the school timetable in 1968. (Wu, 1990) Today, there were 52.5% teachers taking "The handbook of guidance activities for students" as primary reference for guiding, and 31.0% teachers used it as auxiliary reference for guiding. (Chen, 1995) "The handbook of guidance activities for students" as a textbook. There were various kinds of editions of the book published under the monitoring by The Ministry of Education. Generally, teachers in the same school in Taiwan adopt the same edition handbook or textbook after discussion among colleagues who teach the same course. Because the compilation of all editions of handbooks should follow the outline of the curriculum, they are similar in contents. The author categorized the guidance contents into 33 questions from 4 kinds of handbooks used popularly by southern Taiwan secondary school teachers. Through Factor Analysis Statistics Method, the 33 questions were classified into 7 clusters as following: (1) learning and overcome pressure, (2) career, (3) life, (4) puberty health, (5) evaluation and potential development, (6) rationality and communication, (7) social concern and adaptation.

It is a good way for a counselors to use 1 hour per week to conduct classroom guidance to help students. When a counselor leaves his(her) office to classroom, he(she) is just like a teacher, he(she) must induce students to learn. The attitude of students toward guidance curriculum will determine the effect of their learning. When students do not pay much attention to the course, they are usually be ineffective learners. If students feel the subject important during learning, they tend to participate enthusiastically and achieve more. So, student's cognition of the importance of the content of guidance curriculum is a major key to the decision of the distributions of teaching time and the revision of a handbook. Especially, guidance is aimed at helping students personal development, therefore, a student should be the main body of teaching in classroom guidance curriculum.

There have been some studies regarding Classroom Guidance Activities completed in

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151

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Taiwan(Wu, 1990; Chen, 1995; Chen, 1998; Young, 1993), Those studies provide some important data. But there has still not been much research regarding students' cognition to the importance of Classroom Guidance Activities published, up to now.

The purpose of this study was to provide data to help answer the following questions: (a)What rank would students rate the importance of Classroom Guidance Activities among 21 kinds of subjects in secondary school? (b)What is the most important question and what is the least important question in student's choice of 33 kinds of guidance contents and what is the reason? (c)Will gender and personality have interactive influence on the scores of the cognition of importance?

Methodology

There were 654 students from six selected junior high schools, including 253 were grade 1, 181 were grade 2, 220 were grade 3. They completed "Students' Cognition of the Importance of the Content of Guidance Curriculum Scale". The questionnaire included two parts. In the first part, students were asked to arrange the rank order of the importance of 21 kinds of subjects which they learned. The sum of the rank-order of a subject (which students sorted all subjects according to their own opinion and then gave a rank-order for this subject) was calculated to understand the importance of Classroom Guidance Activities in contrast to other subjects.

In the second part, there were 33 questions, each of which represented one kind of content of guidance curriculum. These questions were designed according to Likert-type scaled. Students were asked to choose one item from "very important (given 5 scores)" "important (given 4 scores)" "no opinion (given 3 scores)" "slightly important (given 2 scores)" "very not important (given 1 scores)", according to their own opinions on each question. The average score of each question was calculated to understand the importance of the fact that how students considered each kind of content of guidance curriculum was. The higher the average score was, the more important students considered each question.

In the last of the second part, there were two open-ended questions. Students were asked

(1)What is the most important among the 33 questions, and what makes it important for them?

(2)What is the least important among the 33 questions, and what makes it unimportant for them?

In addition, the variables of students characteristic were divided into two dimensions. The first was gender ("male" and "female"). The second was personality ("high independence" "medium independence" "low independence"). The survey instrument of personality variables was called KO'S Mental Health Questionnaire(KMHQ).The total scores of the 33 questions which represented the importance of guidance curriculum were analyzed by ANOVA to understand if there were interactions between "gender" and "personality" on the influence of student's cognition of the importance of guidance curriculum.

Results

1.The importance of Classroom Guidance Activities in contrast to other subjects

There are 21 kinds of subjects in junior high school in Taiwan. The rank of the importance of Classroom Guidance Activities is 19th. This shows, in contrast to other subjects, that Classroom Guidance Activities is unimportant from the viewpoint of students. Table 1 shows students pay much more attention to English, Chinese, Mathematics etc. First of all is English. Students may know English is used around the world. In the global village, it is necessary to use English to communicate with foreigners. The second is Chinese. The third is Mathematics. This shows students pay much attention to basic subjects which students have to prepare in Monthly Examinations and they occupy a lot of learning time in a class schedule. As to Classroom Guidance Activities as Music Education, Esthetic Education, Boy Scout Training, Group Activities, Local Art, and other Elective Subjects etc., students pay less attentions to them. In contrast to English, Chinese and Mathematics, in teaching these subjects teachers need not give written exam, and there is only 1 or 2 hours needed per week to teach them.

Table 1: The Sum of the Rank-Order which Students Arranged the Importance of Subjects and the Sort According Importance Order.

Final Result (importance order)	Subject	The total of importance rank
1	English	2724
2	Chinese	3478
3	Mathematics	4871
4	Computer Curriculum	4910
5	Physical Education	6554
6	The Science of History	6745
7	The Science of Recognizing Taiwan	6758
8	Biology	6801
9	Geography	6956
10	Health Education	6959
11	Physics and Chemistry	6971
12	Citizens Education	7351
13	Home Economics	7540
14	Geoscience	8520
15	Music	8730
16	Esthetic Education	8804
17	Boy Scout Training	9493
18	Group Activities	9536
19	Classroom Guidance Activities	9572
20	Local Art	9942
21	Elective Subject	10631

2. Student's Cognition of the Importance of the Content of Guidance Curriculum Scale results

The results of student's cognition of the importance of 33 topics of the guidance curriculum scale were shown in table 2. The three-higher rank and the three-lower rank were picked out to classified the reasons why they are important or unimportant written by students.(see Appendix)

Table 2: Student's Cognition of the Importance of the Content of Guidance Curriculum Scale Results

	M	SD	Order
Learning and overcome pressure.....	4.299	.551	
3.To learn how to minimize exam anxiety.	4.171	.787	(18)
4.To study the learning strategy.	4.265	.797	(12)
19.To learn how to face frustration.	4.410	.745	(5)
30.To learn how to make use of time.	4.350	.782	(8)

Career.....	4.296	.595	
5.To know the relation between career decision and life.	4.502	.742	(3)
17.To know how to set the career goals.	4.339	.799	(9)
25.To know the basic skills and ability of a vocation.	4.047	.805	(24)
Life.....	4.291	.458	
33.To learn how to enrich the content of life.	4.391	.759	(6)
7.To learn how to build self-confidence, and to cultivate good habits.	4.451	.680	(4)
15.To learn how to arrange a comfortable environment.	4.073	.860	(22)
1.To learn the art of how to build human relationships.	4.636	.588	(1)
18.To learn how to get adapted to family life.	4.229	.885	(14)
10.To learn how to understand oneself.	4.229	.817	(14)
31.To learn the emotion-controlling and trouble-solving methods.	4.318	.777	(10)
16.To understand the difference between persons.	3.969	.895	(29)
21.To cultivate an exact and positive view-point of human life.	4.370	.787	(7)
8.To learn the knowledge of recreation and its planning.	3.931	.852	(30)
32.To learn how to escape from danger and protect oneself from being hurt.	4.604	.634	(2)
Puberty health.....	4.255	.781	
14.To learn the knowledge of physiology in puberty.	4.255	.781	(13)
Evaluation and potential development.....	4.172	.612	
26.To learn how to exploit one's own potential.	4.297	.781	(11)
27.To learn how to estimate the gain or loss of various method.	4.037	.818	(25)
23.To learn how to evaluate a man, an event, a matter objectively.	4.182	.842	(17)
Rationality and communication.....	4.095	.543	
11.To learn how to reject other's demand reasonably.	4.057	.903	(23)
12.To learn how to promote one's own ability of decision-making.	4.080	.837	(21)
3.To learn how to express one's own passion and opinion.	4.214	.781	(16)
9.To know the characteristic and task of both genders.	4.011	.881	(26)
20.To learn reasonable and logical ways of thinking.	4.116	.839	(20)
Social concern and adaptation.....	3.940	.564	
28.To understand the useful society resources.	3.806	.901	(33)
29.To learn the meaning of work and social demand.	4.011	.874	(26)
22.To realize the matters needing attention in the process of helping others or seeking for help.	4.127	.753	(19)
6.To familize with and give concern to the handicapped.	3.986	.846	(28)
24.To realize the teachers and school surroundings, to adapt oneself to school life.	3.873	.910	(31)
13.To understand one's own potential and the possibility of making contributions to society.	3.835	.928	(32)

3.Statistical Analysis Results

The cell means (M) and standard deviations(SD) for the total scores on the Student's Cognition of the Importance of the Content of Guidance Curriculum Scale are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Cell Means and Standard Deviations for the Scores on the Cognition of the Importance of the Content of Guidance Curriculum Scale.

	Personality (independence)					
	High(b1)		Medium(b2)		Low(b3)	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Male(a1)	139.18 (N=128)	14.01	135.61 (N=128)	12.91	132.19 (N=85)	17.32
Female(a2)	140.23 (N=87)	11.64	140.43 (N=120)	13.67	140.60 (N=106)	11.60

The results of the Analysis of Variance shown in Table 4 indicated that the scores of the cognition of guidance curriculum importance on students' gender and students' independence personality, were found to be statistically significant with an F value of 3.64 for interaction ($P<.05$).

Table 4: The Cognition of the Importance of the Content of Guidance Curriculum Scale: Analysis of Variance

Source of variation	SS	DF	MS	F
Main Effects	4281.00	3	1427.00	7.751***

Gender(A)	3497.32	1	3497.32	19.00***
Personality(B)	1210.24	2	605.12	3.29*
2-way Interactions(A*B)	1341.92	2	670.96	3.64*
Explained	5622.92	5	1124.59	6.11***
Residual	119306.55	648	184.12	

*P<.05 ***P<.001

Since the Gender by Personality interaction was significant, then a MANOVA was conducted to test the significance within cells. Table 5 presents the summary results.

Table 5: Multivariate Analysis of Variance Summary Table

Source of variation	SS	DF	MS	F
Gender(a)				
Gender within High(b1)	11.81	1	11.81	.06
Gender within Medium(b2)	1449.78	1	1449.78	7.87**
Gender within Low(b3)	3078.47	1	3078.47	16.72***
Personality(b)				
Personality within Male(a1)	1960.62	2	980.31	5.32**
Personality within Female(a2)	57.88	2	28.94	.16
Within cells	119306.55	648	184.12	

P<.01 *P<.001

Table 5 indicated that there was no significant difference ($F=.06$, $P>.05$) in gender within "the personality with high level independence", but there were significant difference ($F=7.87$, $P<.01$) in gender within "the personality with medium level independence" and significant difference ($F=16.72$, $P<.001$) in gender within "the personality with low level independence". To review from Table 3, it was found that female students recognized the importance ($M=140.43$) of the content of guidance curriculum more than male students did ($M=135.61$) in the group of medium level independence personality, and also in the group of low level independence personality (with female students $M=140.60$ to male students $M=132.19$).

Table 5 also indicated that personality had no significant influences on the cognition of the importance of the content of guidance curriculum for female students ($F=.16$, $P>.05$), but it had significant influence for male students ($F=5.32$, $P<.01$). Using Scheffe Method to compare, it was found that male students with high level independence personality ($M=139.18$) recognized the importance of guidance curriculum more than male students with low level independence personality ($M=132.19$).

Conclusion

1. Compared with other courses in junior high school, the degree of importance of Classroom Guidance Activities was found almost ranked at the last. But when students were asked to rate the degree of importance of the 33 contents of guidance curriculum separately. The average point of the rank lies between "very important" and "important". It means that students identify the contents of guidance curriculum as importance even if Classroom Guidance Activities was only ranked at 19th. It is commendable that students' cognition of the importance of the content of guidance curriculum derives from self-experience and self-understanding, rather than get high scores, praise, rewards, or escape from punishment (Chen, 1998).
2. There were three most important contents which student rated: (1) To learn the art of how to build human relationships, (2) To learn how to escape from danger and protect oneself from harm, (3) To know the relation between career decision and life. The three least important

contents were: (1)To understand the useful social resources, (2)To understand the possibility of making contributions to society, (3)To realize the teachers and school surroundings, to adapt oneself to school life. Analyzing the reasons that students wrote as the most important or the least important items, it was found that students usually paid more attention to their present needs, but neglected to prepare for future. Also, students thought that if knowledge or information can be easily got from our daily life, then, it is not worthy of being taught in a classroom.

3. It was found that student's gender and student's personality had significant interaction. female students with medium independence personality or with low independence personality both attached more importance to the contents of guidance curriculum than male students with corresponding level did. Moreover, male students with high independence personality attached more importance to the contents of guidance curriculum than male students with low independence personality did.

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Appendix

(1) Why did students think it is important?

A. To learn the art of how to build human relationship.

The major reasons why students thought that it's important for them to learn the art of how to build human relationship.

(a) Because humans live in society, they must come into contact with people anyway. If they have good human relationship, they will succeed in whatever they do. They can enjoy together. When some friends get success they can encourage each other, when their friends are sad, they can comfort them.

(b) If people have no good human relationship, they will be disregarded by others, so they will live lonely, feel boresome, and can even be dismissed by their group.

(c) The material about how to make friends with others, and how to get along with them is always ignored in current curriculums.

(d) Today, morality is weak, people always conflict and quarrel with each other, and even do violence to others. Through learning how to make good human relationship, society will be more peaceful.

(e) People can learn from one another, so they can increase their own knowledge, and expand their own living space.

B. To learn how to escape from danger and protect oneself from harm.

The major reasons why students think that it's important for them to learn how to escape from danger are as follows:

(a) Today, there are so many kidnapping and rape cases happening in our society.

(b) Life-safety is the most important after all.

(c) Everybody is worried about his own safety.

(d) People should learn to protect his own safety, lest they should be in an disadvantageous position.

C. To know the relationship between career decision and life.

(a) To choose entering a higher school or getting a job is an important goal for junior high school students.

(b) Most junior high school students do not understand their aptitudes. They are always disturbed by career problems, so they can get profits from accepting guidance in such problems.

(c) Everybody should make plans and be prepared for the life in the future.

(d) Career problems do exert a lot influences on junior high school students.

(2) Why did students think it is less important?

A. To understand the useful resources in our society.

(a) There were a lot of subjects such as English, Mathematics etc., for students to learn. So, there was no time to allow students to recognize the useful resources in our society. They do not need such knowledge badly least until they are 20 years old.

(b) We do not think it is meaningful to learn these contents.

(c) People can know the information from magazines and networks.

(d) The only task of students is reading, so they need not be involved in other domains.

(e) If we have any social problems, we can turn to some relative experts who are familiar with such cases for help.

(f) Senior high school students need such socially-related knowledge much more than junior high school students.

B. To understand the possibility of making contribution to society.

(a) I am still a student. It is impossible for me to make any contribution to society.

(b) I have no ability to make any contribution to society, since I have not grown up.

C. To realize the teachers and school surroundings, and to adapt oneself to school life.

(a) Students will be familiar with school environments and teachers after a long period of time.

(b) Some schools are very large, so it is difficult for students to be familiar with all teachers and places.

(c) Students can understand school environments and teachers from brothers, sisters or neighbors. So, it is not necessary to learn them from curriculums.

(d) Students can be familiar with school environments and teachers after entering school, so teaching these is unnecessary.

(e) To make the acquaintance with many teachers would bring them no profits. They thought it is of no use to do so.